

Actions Relating to State Commemorative Areas

Over the past fifteen years the Office of State Parks has successfully developed a state commemorative area program that includes facilities and interpretive materials. Essentially, the goals of the previous plan have been met. The current strategy should improve existing commemorative areas by adding facilities where needed to enhance programming, and to develop new state commemorative areas to fill the gaps in the Office of State Parks' cultural and historical holdings. Unlike state parks, state commemorative areas are not based on regional distribution or access to population centers. The location and development of new state commemorative areas must be based upon the quality of the resource and the need for cultural and historical representation. Programming and maintenance are critical issues at all state commemorative areas, and must be quality offerings.

This plan recommends \$49,231,414 in acquisition and development of new and existing state commemorative areas over the next fifteen-year period. All estimated costs are 1996 dollars and should be adjusted for inflation as years pass.

ACTION : Establish the following development goals for the next fifteen years:

1. Complement present holdings by adding new sites based on unrepresented cultures or neglected historical areas. These sites must meet criteria established by the Office of State Parks.
2. Continue to develop interpretive and educational programs to further enhance the recreational and educational experience of the visitor.
3. Maintain and upgrade present sites of statewide significance.
4. Consider special action on sites that do not substantially meet the criteria or have other problems associated with them.
5. Develop and institute a comprehensive resource management plan for all state commemorative areas.

ACTION : Develop, renovate and acquire elements which are:

1. Outlined in current master plans of existing state commemorative areas, but not completed, and
2. determined to be necessary to improve the recreational and educational experiences of state commemorative areas, or
3. are needed to help meet the criteria for state commemorative areas.



*Port Hudson State
Commemorative Area*

Exhibit VI. - Cultural and Historical Gaps and Proposed New Sites

NEW ACQUISITIONS

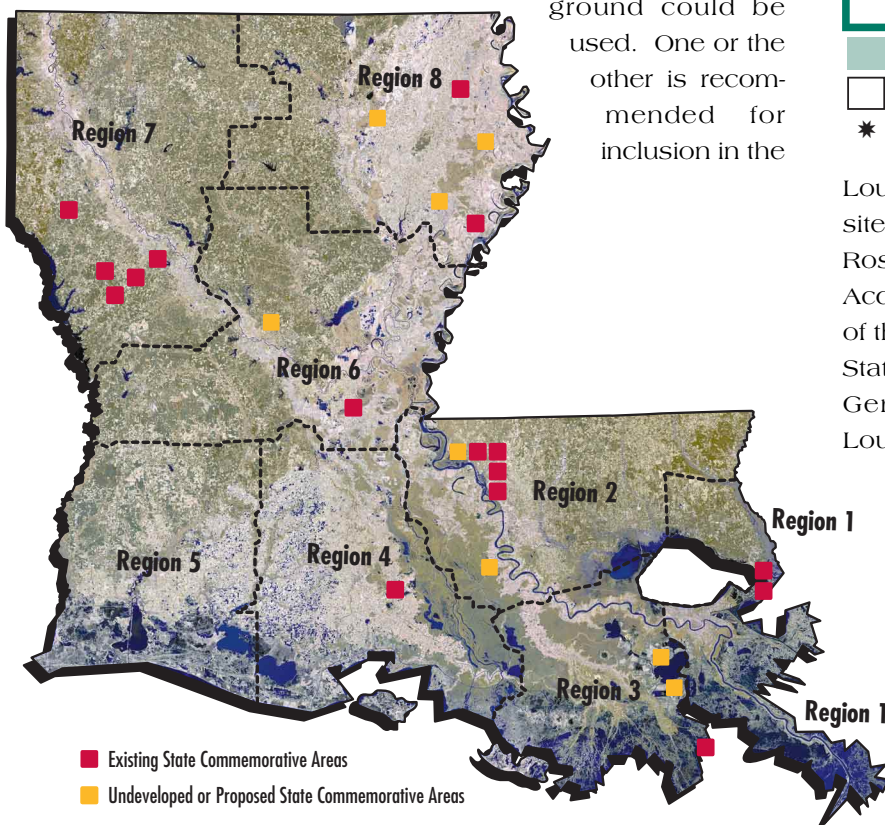
Additional sites for state commemorative areas should be evaluated based upon the criteria established at the time of potential acquisition or when serious proposals for donation are made to the Office of State Parks. Given the limited funds, priority should be given to fully developing existing state commemorative areas before additional sites are acquired.

ACTION : Use discretion in acquisition and development of new state commemorative areas acquiring sites which meet state commemorative area criteria and may otherwise be lost if not acted upon.

Six sites have been identified as significant and unique additions to the Louisiana State Parks System. Acquisition of Laurel Valley Plantation, the Southern Heritage and Research Center, Oakland Plantation, Evergreen Plantation, Watson Brake and regained operation of Plaquemine Lock are recommended at this

time. Four additional comparable sites sharing the same cultural background could be used. One or the other is recommended for inclusion in the

Figure II. - Distribution of State Commemorative Areas, Existing and Proposed



	Proposed New Acquisitions	Laurel Valley Plantation	Southern Heritage & Research Ctr.	Evergreen Plantation	Watson Brake	Oakland Plantation	Plaquemine Locks	Raffmann Mounds	Prichard Landing Mounds	Rosedown Plantation	Whitney Plantation
Cultural Representation											
Pre-Historic Indian				*							
Early Indian											
Middle Indian								*	*		
Late Indian								*	*		
Caddoan Indian											
Historic Indian											
Colonial Spanish											
Colonial French											
African American			*								
German											
Early English											
Acadian											
Anglo Upland											
Historical Representation											
Fort and Expansion											
Antebellum Plantation											
Civil War											
Historic Sugar	*	*								*	*
Historic Cotton				*					*		
Lumbering		*									
Oil Industry											
River Navigation						*					
Education											
Government											
Music											
Cemetery											

- Historical or Cultural Representations Currently Provided in OSP System
- Gaps in Historical or Cultural Representations
- Proposed Historical or Cultural Representations for New Sites

Louisiana State Parks System. The alternate sites are: Raffman Mounds, Prichard Landing, Rosedown Plantation and Whitney Plantation. Acquisition of these new sites would close most of the cultural and historical gaps in the Office of State Parks' offerings. This would leave only the Germanic Culture, the Oil Industry and Louisiana Government History without representative sites in the Louisiana State Parks System.

Exhibit VI, above, shows the cultural and historical gaps in current Office of State Parks' holdings as detailed in the resource study. It also shows the existing historical and cultural values of the current holdings and the representations' proposed new sites.

Actions Relating to State Preservation Areas

State preservation areas should be acquired and developed to foster natural resource education and ecotourism opportunities. During the past fifteen years the Office of State Parks has had difficulty developing state preservation areas and their facilities using the normal channels of acquisition, planning and development. Due to the lack of operating funds, the significant issue of management of these unique, and often rare, environments and habitats has also been stymied. Management may be the single greatest issue that assures that a state preservation area retains the qualities for which it was acquired and worthy of preserving. Conservation and proper resource management of significant ecological environments should be provided at all Office of State Parks holdings.

This plan recommends an estimated \$33,560,000 worth of acquisition and development at existing and proposed sites over the next fifteen-year period. All estimated costs are 1996 dollars and should be adjusted for inflation as years pass.

ACTION : Establish the following development goals for the next fifteen years:

1. Develop, maintain and upgrade present sites of statewide significance.
2. Complement present holdings by cooperative development and management ventures with other agencies such as the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Louisiana Nature Conservancy. Priority in adding new sites should be given to sites owned and managed in cooperation with other agencies or solely by the Office of State Parks, and should be based on representative geologic or vegetative associations not currently in the Louisiana State Parks System. These sites must meet the criteria established by the Office



Audubon State Commemorative Area

of State Parks, or have significant potential for natural resource education and ecotourism.

3. Continue to develop interpretive and educational programs.
4. Develop and institute a comprehensive resource management plan for all preservation resources.

ACTION : Focus on a few sites and work with other groups on preservation.

State preservation areas currently include the Atchafalaya Wilderness Center, Big Cypress, Coochie Brake, Tunica Hills, Chenier Au Tigre and the Washington Parish site. All are viable sites for preservation areas with the exception of the Washington Parish site. Given the limited funds available, these sites should be developed to meet their potential and be exemplary models for design, use and management. Once these sites are in a position to showcase the preservation concept in action, acquisition and development of other sites should be pursued. The preservation policy in the Office of State Parks should be oriented to working with other groups on preservation area issues. Already, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, through its Natural Heritage Program, and the Nature Conservancy, with its purchase and management program, working together have made great strides in acquisition and preservation of critical state habitats when possible.

ACTION : Focus on sites for preservation which have high potential for natural resource education and ecotourism opportunities.

The Office of State Parks is one of several agencies concerned with the preservation of natural ecosystems in Louisiana. While some agencies, such as the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Natural Heritage Program and the Nature Conservancy, are oriented toward preservation and management, the role of the Office of State Parks should be slightly different. It should be oriented more towards the preservation of natural settings, while providing natural resource education programs to the public. Sites should not only meet the criteria for geologic and vegetative representations, but should also allow the public to visit the areas to learn about the natural systems without degradation of the resource.

UPGRADING OF PRESENT SITES

Most of the existing state preservation holdings meet the established criteria for state preservation area status. The Atchafalaya Wilderness Center lacks significant basin habitat, but it is intended to provide a base where visitors can learn about the features of the basin and how access can be gained and appreciated at other nearby facilities. The Washington Parish State Preservation Area currently does not meet the criteria for preservation area status. There are some problems with the integrity of the natural resource and it does not fit well within the geologic and vegetation representations that are designated in the criteria. It is recommended that additional land be acquired and that this site be reclassified as a state park on the Bogue Chitto River. Wherever the deficiencies detract from the proper use or interpretation of the area, it must be corrected within reasonable means and costs.

ACTION : Develop, renovate and acquire elements which are:

1. Outlined in current master plans of existing state preservation areas, but not completed, and
2. determined to be necessary to improve the recreational and educational experiences of state preservation areas, or
3. are needed to help meet the criteria for state preservation areas.



Sam Houston Jones State Park

NEW ACQUISITIONS

When determining whether a potential preservation area site is needed in the Louisiana State Parks System, it is important to realize that many different combinations of geology and vegetation are possible and that not all combinations will justify state preservation area status. Selection should be based primarily upon filling gaps in major representations of statewide significance. A new site should be added only when its addition improves the state parks system from an ecotourism and natural resource education standpoint and when practical means for resource management are available. Only new sites that meet the criteria for state preservation area status, that provide for natural resource education and ecotourism, and whose natural resources can be effectively managed should be considered. Other sites should be left to agencies whose mission is specific to preservation and management. Of the potential new sites studied, only one, the Atchafalaya Wilderness Center East, is recommended for inclusion in the Louisiana State Parks System, at this time.

Exhibit VII outlines the different geologic and vegetation representations currently in the Louisiana State Parks System, as well as the gaps in representations.

ACTION : Actively pursue the land in the Atchafalaya Wilderness Center East for inclusion into the Louisiana State Parks System as a new state preservation area.

There are 12,000 - 20,000 acres of the Atchafalaya Wilderness Center East that should be considered for state preservation area status. The

Corps of Engineers is in the process of determining the future use of this land and the Office of State Parks is a potential agency that this land may be transferred to. The inclusion of this land into the Louisiana State Parks System is recommended for a new state preservation area to be called the Atchafalaya Wilderness Center East. The estimated costs for the acquisition of land for the development of the interpretive center, parking and other necessary facilities to provide access into this new area is \$7,000,000.

Exhibit VII. Current Representations and Gaps in State Preservation Areas

	Existing Sites	La State Arboretum	In Progress Sites	Atchafalaya Wilderness Center	Parish S.P.A.	Tunica Hills	Trudeau Site	Chenier Au Tigre	Big Cypress	Cochie Brake
Geologic Representations										
Deltaic / Cheniere Plains								*		
Major Alluvial Bottoms				*						*
Pleistocene Prairie Terraces										
Pleistocene Hill Terraces		*			*	*	*			
Tertiary Uplands (Hills)									*	
Small Alluvial Bottoms										
Vegetation Representations										
Coastal Marshes								*		
Coastal Prairies										
Bottomland Hardwoods				*						
Cypress/Cypress Tupelo Swamps				*					*	*
Longleaf Pine/Savannah										
Bayhead Swamps									*	
Small Stream Forests										
Spruce Pine Hardwood Forests										
Mixed Hardwoods - Loblolly Pine Forests		*		*						
Upland Hardwood Forests		*			*	*				
Chenier Forests: Coastal Live Oak-Hackberry										
Upland Longleaf Pine Forests										
Shortleaf Pine Forests										

 Gaps in Geologic or Vegetation Representation
 Current Representation in OSP System



Figure III. *Distribution of State Preservation Areas - Existing and Proposed*

